



# Bare Witness

Matthew Go  
Anthropology

Deaths from homicides, accidents, disasters, or conflicts can result in unknown human remains that require identification before further investigation. To identify these remains, an anthropologist can piece together details about a person’s life from their bones. The accuracy of such anthropological methods depends on the diversity of available skeletal research collections, of which there are few around the world. The majority of current methods are based on studies from skeletons of European or African descent largely reflecting American demographics prior to the 1950s. Given the wide range of global human variation, anthropologists must address the effects and limitations of method applicability on understudied groups. Filipinos are an incredibly important yet understudied demographic given their large population sizes, widespread diaspora, unique genetic histories, and the Philippines’ frequent experiences with disasters, fatalities, and hostilities both natural and manmade. My research seeks to diversify our knowledge of Filipino skeletal variation and how it can be applied to forensic contexts. Towards these goals, I established the first Filipino skeletal research collection in the world (pictured in the background) from which population-specific methods can be derived. The collection is accessible to scholars internationally, ensuring the production of knowledge grows beyond the limits of my dissertation.